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Human resources management

Amendments to the Staff Regulations

Report of the Secretary-General

Introduction

1. The present report contains the proposed amendments to the Staff Regulations that would be needed should the General Assembly approve the Secretary-General's proposals for streamlining of contracts and harmonization of conditions of service, including United Nations field operations, with a view to their implementation on 1 July 2009.

2. Should the General Assembly approve the amended Staff Regulations, the Secretary-General would prepare the full text of the new set of Staff Rules for the first resumed part of the sixty-third session of the Assembly.

Amendment relating to the status of staff

3. The text of regulation 1.1, paragraph (e), would be amended to reflect the replacement of the 100, 200 and 300 series with one new set of staff rules.

Amendment relating to appointment and promotion

4. The text of regulation 4.5 would be amended to reflect the introduction of the three new types of contract (temporary, fixed-term and continuing) and the fact that probationary and permanent contracts would be discontinued as from 1 July 2009.

5. The amendments proposed to regulation 4.5 were previously included in annex I to the Secretary-General's report A/62/274.

* A/63/150.

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Amendment relating to separation from service

6. The text of regulation 9.1 and annex III to the Staff Regulations would be amended to reflect the introduction of the three new types of appointment (temporary, fixed-term and continuing) and the conditions of termination associated with each.

7. The amendments proposed to regulation 9.1 and annex III to the Staff Regulations were previously included in annexes I and II to the Secretary-General's report A/62/274.

8. The text of the amendments to the above Staff Regulations is set out in full in the annexes to the present report.

Conclusion and recommendation

9. **Should the General Assembly approve the Secretary-General's proposals for streamlining of contracts and harmonization of conditions of service, the Assembly is requested to approve the amendments to the Staff Regulations.**

Annex I

Amendments to the Staff Regulations

Regulation 1.1

(e) The Staff Regulations apply to all staff at all levels, including staff of the separately funded organs.

Regulation 4.5

(a) Appointment of Under-Secretaries-General and of Assistant Secretaries-General shall normally be for a period of up to five years, subject to prolongation or renewal. Other staff members shall be granted appointments of either unlimited or fixed duration under such terms and conditions consistent with the present Regulations as the Secretary-General may prescribe.

(b) The Secretary-General shall prescribe which staff members are eligible for each type of appointment.

Regulation 9.1

(a) The Secretary-General may terminate the appointment of a staff member who holds a permanent appointment and whose probationary period has been completed if the necessities of service require abolition of the post or reduction of the staff, if the services of the individual concerned prove unsatisfactory or if he or she is, for reasons of health, incapacitated for further service.

The Secretary-General may also, giving the reasons therefor, terminate the appointment of a staff member who holds a permanent appointment:

(i) If the conduct of the staff member indicates that the staff member does not meet the highest standards of integrity required by Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter;

(ii) If facts anterior to the appointment of the staff member and relevant to his or her suitability come to light that, if they had been known at the time of his or her appointment, should, under the standards established by the Charter, have precluded his or her appointment.

No termination under subparagraphs (i) and (ii) shall take place until the matter has been considered and reported on by a special advisory board appointed for that purpose by the Secretary-General.

Finally, the Secretary-General may terminate the appointment of a staff member who holds a permanent appointment if such action would be in the interest of the good administration of the Organization and in accordance with the standards of the Charter, provided that the action is not contested by the staff member concerned.

(b) The Secretary-General may terminate the appointment of a staff member with a fixed-term appointment prior to the expiration date for any of the reasons specified in paragraph (a) above, or for such other reason as may be specified in the letter of appointment.

(c) In the case of all other staff members, including staff members serving on a continuing, temporary or probationary appointment, the Secretary-General may, at any time, terminate the appointment if, in his or her opinion, such action would be in the interest of the good administration of the Organization and in accordance with the Charter, or for any of the reasons specified in paragraph (a) above.

Annex II

Annex III to the Staff Regulations: termination indemnity

Staff members whose appointments are terminated shall be paid an indemnity in accordance with the following provisions:

(a) Except as provided in paragraphs (b), (c) and (e) below and in regulation 9.3 (b), the termination indemnity shall be paid in accordance with the following schedule:

	Months of gross salary, less staff assessment, where applicable		
Completed years of service	*Permanent and continuing appointments*	*Indefinite appointments and probationary appointments (for the duration of the probationary period)*	*Appointments for a fixed duration exceeding six months*
Less than 1	Not applicable	Nil)	One week for each month of uncompleted service subject to a minimum of six weeks' and a maximum of three months' indemnity pay
1	Not applicable	1)	
2	3	1)	
3	3	2)	
4	4	3)	
5	5	4)	
6	6	5	3
7	7	6	5
8	8	7	7
9	9	9	9
10	9.5	9.5	9.5
11	10	10	10
12	10.5	10.5	10.5
13	11	11	11
14	11.5	11.5	11.5
15 or more	12	12	12

(b) A staff member whose appointment is terminated for reasons of health shall receive an indemnity equal to the indemnity provided under paragraph (a) of the present annex reduced by the amount of any disability benefit that the staff member may receive under the Regulations of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund for the number of months to which the indemnity rate corresponds.

(c) A staff member whose appointment is terminated for unsatisfactory services or who for disciplinary reasons is dismissed for misconduct other than by summary dismissal may be paid, at the discretion of the Secretary-General, an indemnity not exceeding one half of the indemnity provided under paragraph (a) of the present annex.

(d) No indemnity payments shall be made to:

(i) A staff member who resigns, except where termination notice has been given and the termination date agreed upon;

(ii) A staff member who has a probationary or indefinite appointment that is terminated during the first year of service;

(iii) A staff member who has a temporary or a fixed-term appointment that is completed on the expiration date specified in the letter of appointment;

(iv) A staff member who is summarily dismissed;

(v) A staff member who abandons his or her post;

(vi) A staff member who is retired under the Regulations of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund.

(e) Staff members specifically engaged for conference and other short-term service or for service with a mission, or as experts, and staff members who are locally recruited for service in established offices away from Headquarters may be paid termination indemnity if and as provided in their letters of appointment.

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Eradication of poverty and other development issues

Implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017)

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 62/205 on the proclamation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017). The report provides recommendations on how to make the Second Decade effective in support of poverty eradication-related internationally agreed development goals.

* A/63/150.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 62/205, the General Assembly proclaimed the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) in order to support, in an efficient and coordinated manner, the internationally agreed development goals related to poverty eradication, including the Millennium Development Goals. It reiterated that eradicating poverty was the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, in particular for developing countries. The Assembly urged all Governments, the international community, including the United Nations system, and all other actors to continue to pursue seriously the objective of poverty eradication.

2. In the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it a report containing recommendations on how to make the Second Decade effective, in support of the poverty eradication-related internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The present report responds to this request.

3. The report briefly summarizes the conclusion of the review of the first Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006); highlights lessons learned from current international decades proclaimed by the General Assembly; summarizes inputs received from Governments and civil society on how to make the Second Decade effective; and examines the role of the United Nations systems in scaling up poverty eradication efforts in support of the Second Decade. The report concludes with a number of recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly.

II. Evaluation of the implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)

4. The Secretary-General submitted to the Commission for Social Development a review of the first Decade (E/CN.5/2006/3) and to the General Assembly a comprehensive report evaluating its achievements (A/62/267). The evaluation also offered an opportunity to address the progress made in the fight against poverty at the midpoint of the Millennium Development Goals.

5. Poverty retreated globally over the course of the Decade, but much remains to be done. This progress at the global level was largely a result of successful poverty eradication efforts in China, but progress was very slow in some parts of the world. A somewhat similar assessment of the situation was made in 2000 at the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly and again at the 2005 World Summit. This suggests that the magnitude and complexity of the challenge to eradicate poverty calls for a much longer time frame, beyond 2015.

6. By the end of the Decade, poverty eradication had been adopted as an overarching theme of all global summits and conferences and had been firmly anchored at the core of the United Nations development agenda. Many developing countries had prioritized the goal of the eradication of poverty by setting poverty reduction targets and formulating and implementing national poverty reduction plans.

7. The mixed results in achieving poverty reduction have underscored the need for a better understanding of the nature and range of the deep-rooted obstacles that

countries face in their efforts to reduce poverty. It has become clear that national development strategies need to be broad and inclusive, and should adopt an integrated and holistic approach that can address poverty in all its dimensions: access to health services, education, food, productive employment and decent work and financial resources; gender equality; and the empowerment and participation of all disadvantaged groups, including the poor, in the development process. Strategic action includes pragmatic fiscal policies and sound monetary policies that promote macroeconomic stability while stimulating public and private investment, employment creation and growth. While such strategies are gaining support, their operationalization remains a challenge.

8. It has also become evident that, without support from the donor community, national capacity-building and mobilization of national resources cannot be achieved by countries that experience serious difficulties in reducing poverty. Unfortunately, repeated commitment to align official development assistance (ODA) with national efforts to reduce poverty has been limited to debt relief, and spending on core development programmes remained constant over the Decade.

9. It is equally important for the international community to contribute to national efforts by creating a global economic environment that promotes economic growth and employment creation in developing countries.

III. Lessons learned from current international decades

10. Currently, eight international decades proclaimed by the General Assembly are in effect. Three decades related to culture and education are in the domain of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO): the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, which began on 1 January 2005 (resolution 59/237); the United Nations Literacy Decade, which began on 1 January 2003 (resolution 56/116); and the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010) (resolution 53/25). In the area of health, the World Health Organization plays a leading role in the Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa (2001-2010) (resolution 55/284). In addition, the United Nations Secretariat reports on the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2001-2010) (resolution 55/146).

11. In addition to the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017), two more decades are being coordinated by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat. These are the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (2005-2014) (resolution 59/174) and the International Decade for Action "Water for Life", 2005-2015 (resolution 58/217). The report briefly reviews the objectives, activities, plans of action and arrangements for inter-agency engagement, to identify elements that may be useful in the context of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty.

International Decade for Action "Water for Life", 2005-2015

12. World Water Day, 22 March 2005, marked the official commencement of the "Water for Life" Decade. The primary goal of the Decade is to promote efforts to fulfil international commitments made on water and water-related issues by 2015. Relevant commitments include the targets of reducing by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. The goal for all countries to stop the unsustainable exploitation of water resources and to develop integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans as agreed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development is also an important focus of the Decade. Furthermore, special emphasis is placed on ensuring the involvement of women in these development efforts.

13. The Decade is coordinated by UN-Water, a system-wide inter-agency mechanism of all relevant agencies, departments and programmes involved with water-related issues. The chair of the inter-agency mechanism rotates among the participating agencies. It is currently with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs functioning as its secretariat.

14. A wide range of activities is being organized by UN-Water, its member organizations, as well as national, regional and non-governmental actors. No dedicated trust fund has been set up to support activities organized under the "Water for Life" Decade. However, a centrally maintained calendar of events is maintained by UNESCO and is publicly accessible.

15. Each country is expected to take its own approach to organize activities around the Decade, and activities aimed at promoting public awareness are encouraged to use a dedicated logo developed for the Decade. No internationally agreed plan of action for the Decade has been developed and, as its stated objective implies, activities under the Decade are carried out on a voluntary basis. While the Decade was proclaimed by the General Assembly and policy measures related to water discussed during the thirteenth session of the Commission for Sustainable Development in 2005, no recurrent discussion or evaluation of its activities by an intergovernmental body has been planned.

Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (2005-2014)

16. The General Assembly decided that the goals of the Second Decade should be the further strengthening of international cooperation to resolve the problems faced by indigenous people in the six areas of culture, education, health, human rights, the environment, and social and economic development. The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs was appointed Coordinator for the Second Decade and he works closely with the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, as well as the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues, on activities implemented under the Decade. A specific Voluntary Fund in support of those activities was also established for the Decade.

17. A detailed draft programme of action for the Second Decade, covering a comprehensive set of activities in the six areas mentioned above, was developed by the Secretariat on the basis of inputs from the Permanent Forum and the

Inter-Agency Support Group and adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/142. The Assembly also adopted "Partnership for action and dignity" as the official theme for the Second Decade.

18. The Programme of Action for the Second Decade (A/60/270, sect. II), supported in part by the Voluntary Fund, contains five detailed objectives: promoting non-discrimination and inclusion; promoting full and effective participation; redefining equitable and culturally appropriate development policies; adopting targeted policies and programmes; and developing strong monitoring mechanisms and enhancing accountability for the protection of indigenous peoples. The Programme of Action includes recommendations for activities at the international and national levels, including activities that could be undertaken by organizations of indigenous peoples.

Some key lessons

19. From the two decades reviewed above, and on the basis of the experience of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, one important lesson that emerges is that a dedicated inter-agency mechanism is required to develop, support and monitor the activities that are being implemented and to fully support national ownership of the Second Decade. In the current institutional framework to support the internationally agreed development goals, poverty is generally considered an overarching theme. However, unlike other critical issues that are mainstreamed in United Nations work for economic and social development, such as gender and sustainable development, no dedicated inter-agency mechanism currently exists to address the primary challenge of reducing poverty. The Second Decade can provide an important opportunity to address this gap.

20. A plan of action that provides for coherence and continuity of activities as well as inclusiveness of participation has proven critical in ensuring a strong focus on implementation of the activities of the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. Such a plan of action in support of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty could be developed by an inter-agency group in consultation with all stakeholders and submitted to the General Assembly.

IV. Synopsis of views on the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017)

Views of Governments

21. A communication was sent to all Member States in early 2008 requesting the views of Governments on how to make the Second Decade effective, to strengthen the leadership role of the United Nations in promoting international cooperation for development and to achieve the integration of developing countries into the world economy and ensure that the benefits of globalization are fairly distributed. Views were also solicited on how the Second Decade could be used to inject new momentum into the global partnership for poverty eradication. Responses were received from the following Member States: Cambodia, El Salvador, Germany, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Portugal, South Africa, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

22. Cambodia stated that poverty eradication and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is a shared responsibility of both developed and developing countries. No meaningful progress has occurred in achieving the ODA target of 0.7 per cent of the gross national income of developed countries, while the rapidly changing global economic situation is having a vast impact on the poor. Cambodia prepared its National Strategic Development Plan, 2006-2010, with a pro-poor and pro-rural focus, through an extensive process of consultation. It is vitally necessary to target interventions at the grass-roots level that have a direct impact on productivity and livelihoods.

23. El Salvador called for an integrated approach and stressed the importance of strengthening the various measures taken so far while addressing impediments to reducing poverty. Piecemeal interventions cannot succeed in reducing poverty. Combining short-term alleviation measures with structural measures in the areas of education, water and sanitation, food security, microcredit and agricultural productivity, among others, is necessary.

24. Germany viewed its development policy as part of a global effort aimed at reducing poverty worldwide, building peace and realizing democracy, promoting equitable forms of globalization and protecting the natural environment. Germany contributes to these goals by supporting the implementation of nationally owned development strategies. It coordinates its development efforts with that of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the European Union with a view to supporting coherent, comprehensive and integrated efforts in the fight against poverty.

25. Mali adopted, in May 2002, a strategic framework for the fight against poverty. As a result, the poverty rate declined from 64 per cent of the total population in 2001 to 59 per cent in 2006. The Second Decade should aim at reducing the gap between developed countries and developing countries and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It should contribute to reinforcing the leadership role of the United Nations in the promotion of international cooperation and ensure the integration of developing countries in the global economy. The Government of Mali will seize the opportunity of the Second Decade to further promote the role of agriculture, the private sector and civil society, and its international partnerships and to step up its overall efforts to eradicate poverty.

26. Malta welcomed the Second Decade and stressed that future initiatives should focus on the root causes of poverty as well as on issues that undermine the progress achieved. Actions dealing with women and children should be strengthened, particularly in the areas of education, training and skill development. Malta also welcomed initiatives aimed at raising development awareness and emphasized the value of partnership and solidarity in helping to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The United Nations should support and publicize those efforts through the mass media and information and communications technology. Such campaigns are essential in order to more fully engage the private sector and civil society in development issues, thus inducing them to contribute more to the eradication of poverty.

27. Mexico also welcomed the launching of the Second Decade because it provides an opportunity to reinforce the global alliances for development and the preparation of innovative policies based on new realities. The Decade should be used to promote fair globalization and promote new sources of finance for

development. More developed countries should also use the Decade to honour their commitments to increase ODA to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income. The Decade should also give new impetus to addressing Africa's development needs as well as those of middle-income countries.

28. Portugal contended that the Millennium Development Goals should remain the basis for poverty eradication efforts pursued by the United Nations system and the international community, with a particular focus on sub-Saharan Africa and keeping in mind the close link between poverty eradication and peace and security. The challenge of economic disparities and inequalities in middle-income countries also needs to be addressed. Promoting aid effectiveness and efficiency should be the key priorities of the Second Decade, as they are for Portugal. This includes promoting country ownership, achieving aid complementarities among donors, and establishing monitoring and evaluating tools.

29. South Africa emphasized that during the period from 2008 to 2017, the community of nations should ensure that countries eradicate absolute poverty and substantially reduce overall poverty worldwide. South Africa is of the view that poverty eradication requires freedom, peace, safety and security, democracy and good governance. Eradication of poverty also requires establishing an international trade system that is fair and just. Socio-economic development in Africa needs to be owned and driven by the continent itself, and the New Partnership for Africa's Development is one of the many important vehicles for achieving that objective.

30. The United Arab Emirates stated that a fresh approach is needed to meet the internationally agreed development targets. Promoting and achieving further system-wide coherence is particularly important in the areas of poverty, health and education.

31. Viet Nam indicated that the following actions are necessary to make the Second Decade effective: stepping up economic development; increasing investments to narrow the development gap between geographic areas and social groups; improving social protection systems; and harmonizing environmental concerns with economic development, employment creation and poverty reduction. Viet Nam called for closer coordination and alignment of United Nations country programmes with national development objectives. The United Nations should also promote frequent policy dialogues between the United Nations resident agencies and Governments.

32. Zambia observed that the first Decade had been useful in raising awareness of the challenge of poverty eradication at the global level. Meanwhile, however, poverty levels had increased in many countries. In order for the Second Decade to be effective, all ODA commitments must be fulfilled. The international community should also act quickly to curb the international food crisis. Zambia called for an early conclusion of the Doha Round negotiations so as to establish a fair and just international trading system. Developed countries should transfer appropriate technologies to developing countries so that developing countries can benefit from international trade. The United Nations needs to achieve greater coherence and effectiveness in its development activities and allocate appropriate resources to that effect. Partnership between Governments, civil society and the private sector and improved efficiency in Governments' action should also be encouraged.

33. Zimbabwe expressed the view that the Second Decade can be made effective by strengthening the follow-up and monitoring mechanisms that will allow Member States to assess progress towards the implementation of all internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. In this regard, Zimbabwe proposed that the heads of United Nations agencies responsible for development be afforded an opportunity to report annually to the Second Committee of the General Assembly on the specific activities they have undertaken to assist developing countries to achieve those goals. United Nations agencies could also highlight the challenges they face, and a theme, or thematic clusters, could be chosen for reporting on progress to the Assembly each year.

Visions of civil society

34. The New York-based Subcommittee for the Eradication of Poverty of the NGO Committee for Social Development of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Status with the United Nations (CONGO) organized a number of consultations on the Second Decade during the 2008 sessions of the Commission for Social Development, the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The constituencies of the member non-governmental organizations were also consulted by e-mail.

35. In the view of the Subcommittee, the commitments of the first Decade have failed to mobilize sufficient change and action. In spite of rapid economic growth in many regions, inequalities grew larger and poverty continued to threaten the rights and dignity of people in all regions of the world.

36. The Subcommittee deems it necessary that people living in poverty and their organizations be fully involved in the setting of targets and in the design, implementation, monitoring and assessment of all poverty eradication initiatives, including those to be undertaken within the framework of the Second Decade. It suggests holding a five-year high-level review of the Second Decade focusing on the participation of people living in poverty. Regular assessment of the participation of people living in extreme poverty in poverty eradication programmes could be organized at the regional level with the participation of all United Nations agencies, funds and programmes.

37. The Subcommittee, in stressing that extreme poverty is both a cause and a consequence of violations of human rights, suggests that the theme for the Second Decade should recognize the link between extreme poverty and human rights. Substantive areas that could be considered for a programme of work for the Decade could include: working towards an agreed definition of extreme poverty; highlighting the importance of quality education; addressing the causes of poverty in the context of intersectoral strategies; making health care accessible and affordable; integrating a gender dimension into poverty eradication policies; and reducing military expenditures in order to increase resources for development.

38. In addition to consultations with the NGOs represented in the Subcommittee, a number of other large NGOs involved in poverty alleviation activities were also contacted to seek their views on the Second Decade. Of those organizations, Heifer International indicated that the Second Decade might benefit by placing a stronger emphasis on rural poverty and sustainable agriculture. It also highlighted the need to

better understand how rural development is affected by climate change, international food trade and food market regulatory frameworks.

V. The role of the United Nations system

39. Since the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, poverty eradication has become the central objective of development in the United Nations. The 2005 World Summit further reaffirmed "that development is a central goal in itself and that sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental aspects constitutes a key element of the overarching framework of United Nations activities".[1] At the Summit, world leaders recommitted themselves to eradicate poverty and promote sustained economic growth, sustainable development and global prosperity for all, and underlined the need for urgent action on all sides, including more ambitious national development strategies and efforts backed by increased international support, to achieve further progress towards poverty eradication in all regions of the world.

40. Among the commitments resulting from the 2005 Summit is the resolve "[to] ensure that the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies support the efforts of developing countries through the common country assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework process, enhancing their support for capacity-building".[2] World leaders reaffirmed "the need for the United Nations to play a fundamental role in the promotion of international cooperation for development and the coherence, coordination and implementation of development goals and actions agreed upon by the international community", and resolved "to strengthen coordination within the United Nations system in close cooperation with all other multilateral financial, trade and development institutions in order to support sustained economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development".[3]

41. Intergovernmental mechanisms at the global and regional levels, including those of United Nations regional commissions, should be effectively utilized to ensure successful implementation of the Second Decade. The organizations of the United Nations system, including the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Development Programme and the regional commissions, and relevant international and regional organizations should, within their respective mandates, provide necessary support to the Second Decade.

42. The intergovernmental processes of the United Nations offer unparalleled opportunities for global dialogue on the effectiveness of, and the lessons learned from, our collective efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals related to poverty eradication, including the Millennium Development Goals. Such dialogue lays the foundation for consensus-building at the global level that is needed for effective international cooperation for poverty eradication. In this regard, the recently established Development Cooperation Forum of the Economic and Social Council could play an important role in enhancing the coherence and

[1] Resolution 60/1, para. 10.
[2] Ibid., para. 22 (f).
[3] Ibid., para. 38.

effectiveness of development cooperation efforts, particularly in relation to global poverty eradication.

43. The 2005 Summit called for drawing on the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions, among others, to ensure follow-up to the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits, including the internationally agreed development goals.[4] The Commission for Social Development has, in the past, fulfilled a critical function in the international policy debate on poverty as part of its responsibility to follow up on the 1995 World Summit for Social Development. It is well suited as a forum for policy guidance and further strengthening of efforts for the Second Decade, and for monitoring the implementation of the Second Decade within the framework of follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development.

44. In addition to intergovernmental dialogue and monitoring, a dedicated inter-agency mechanism is required to develop, support and monitor the implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty. In this regard, the United Nations system has already stepped up efforts to coordinate its activities to strive for system-wide coherence and to strengthen its leadership role in the global fight against poverty, in response to the mandates and commitments emanating from major international conferences and summits, including the Millennium Summit of the United Nations and the 2005 World Summit. Existing mechanisms for inter-agency coordination have been further strengthened while new initiatives such as "delivering as one" are being put in place. These provide a solid foundation for enhancing the leadership role of the United Nations system in the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty.

45. In carrying out their respective mandates, the funds and programmes of the United Nations system and the specialized agencies should come together and explicitly lend their support for an effective Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty. Coherence and cooperation in support of the Decade can be achieved through existing inter-agency coordination mechanisms such as the Chief Executives Board by making the Decade a rallying point for inter-agency cooperation. Member States may wish to reflect on the role of the Board and to address the issue of identifying an efficient and coordinated mechanism in support of the Second Decade within the existing institutional set-up.

46. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, as the Secretariat of the Chief Executives Board and the lead entity of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, should play a critical role in implementing, coordinating and monitoring system-wide efforts during the Second Decade. The General Assembly may wish to invite the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs to lead these efforts and serve as the coordinator for the Second Decade.

[4] See resolution 60/1, para. 155.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

47. **The Second Decade should be seen as a framework for reflection and action to boost efforts aimed at achieving the internationally agreed development goals related to poverty eradication. The Decade provides an opportunity to strengthen the social institutions and implement public policies that are necessary to generate development, such as effective institutions for the provision of public goods to the general population and the productive sector; pro-employment growth for decent work in a fair global economic environment; social protection and integration; and an effective international partnership.**

48. **On the basis of a review of practical examples and the experience of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, an observation relevant to successful implementation of the Second Decade is that national ownership of activities in support of the Decade would be vital for its success and, thus, should be encouraged and supported by the international community.**

49. **Achievements and failures in fighting poverty during the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty point to the critical importance of productive employment and decent work as a pathway to successful poverty reduction. This point was reaffirmed by the 2005 World Summit, the ministerial declaration adopted at the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council in 2006[5] as well as in its resolution 2008/18 on promoting full employment and decent work for all. As the ministerial declaration stated, "[o]pportunities for men and women to obtain productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity are essential to ensuring the eradication of hunger and poverty, the improvement of the economic and social well-being for all, the achievement of sustained economic growth and sustainable development of all nations, and a fully inclusive and equitable globalization".**

50. **Social protection is one of the four strategic objectives of the decent work agenda of the International Labour Organization, which has been endorsed by the Economic and Social Council. It is integral to the global efforts to eradicate poverty as access to some basic social protection will help the poor avoid destitution and the near poor from falling into poverty when faced with loss of income, or health or other emergencies. Striving to ensure basic economic security for all in the face of growing job insecurity should be part and parcel of collective efforts to make the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty a success.**

51. **At the dawn of the Second Decade, the theme for the first Decade has become reality. Eradicating poverty is now universally perceived as an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind. Furthermore, Governments have committed themselves to a large array of internationally agreed development goals that account for the complexity and the multi-dimensionality of poverty. The onus is now on Governments, civil society,**

[5] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-first Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/61/3/Rev.1), chap. III, para. 50.

including the private sector, and international organizations to respond effectively to this moral obligation.

52. The General Assembly may consider adopting an overall action theme for the Second Decade that would convey a sense of urgency towards implementing the commitments made to eradicate poverty and to halve poverty by 2015.

53. The General Assembly may wish to integrate the observance of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty into the plan of action for the Second Decade to further enhance the useful role the observance can play in raising public awareness and mobilizing all stakeholders in the fight against poverty, as has been recognized by the Assembly.[6]

54. Experiences also show that a pragmatic plan of action in support of the Second Decade will be critically important to ensure successful implementation. Such a plan should focus on the complementarities of efforts made in support of the Decade to existing national poverty eradication strategies and programmes and make maximum use of existing inter-agency mechanisms to support these activities. This plan of action would include a programme of substantive work spanning the analytical, normative and operational work of the United Nations in the area of poverty eradication. Such a plan would also highlight opportunities for collaboration between various other stakeholders, such as those in the area of poverty research (the International Poverty Centre, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, the World Institute for Development Economics Research, the International Food Policy Research Institute and others), as well as NGOs and civil society organizations that have been actively engaged in poverty eradication at the national and community levels.

55. The plan of action for the Second Decade could use the follow-up activities to the 2005 World Summit as its starting point. The Summit recognized the need to accelerate progress immediately in countries where current trends make the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, especially poverty eradication, unlikely. In response, world leaders resolved "to urgently identify and implement country-led initiatives with adequate international support, consistent with long-term national development strategies that promise immediate and durable improvements in the lives of people and renewed hope for the achievement of the development goals".[7] The Second Decade should build on the implementation, support for and monitoring of such initiatives to generate greater momentum for global action towards poverty eradication.

56. The General Assembly may wish to request the Secretary-General, in consultation with Member States, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society, to prepare a plan of action and to submit it to the Assembly at its sixty-third session under the agenda item entitled "Implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017)".

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[6] See resolution 61/213.

[7] Resolution 60/1, para. 34.

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Request for the inclusion of a supplementary item in the agenda of the sixty-third session

Natural resources and conflict

Identical letters dated 25 July 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to request, pursuant to rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion of a supplementary item, to be considered directly in plenary meeting, entitled "Natural resources and conflict" in the agenda of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly under the heading "Maintenance of international peace and security".

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum in support of the above request is annexed to the present letter.

I have further the honour to request that the present letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Jan **Grauls**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Belgium
to the United Nations in New York

08-44450 (E) 040808

Annex

Explanatory memorandum

Background

1. The link between natural resources and conflict is well documented both at the conceptual level and in the context of specific conflict situations. Growing attention to this question has stimulated various responses, including, but not exclusively, within the United Nations. It has generated discussion in various forums, including in the Security Council, which held a thematic debate on this issue under the Belgian presidency in June 2007. On 8 May 2008, the Working Group on Lessons Learned of the Peacebuilding Commission also had a horizontal discussion on the issue.

2. The policy debate on this issue has long been focused on particular countries or narrowed down to specific dimensions. The thematic debate organized by Belgium on this subject during its presidency of the Security Council in June 2007 was intended to broaden the understanding in a horizontal way. This debate was, inter alia, instrumental in underlining that natural resources, in certain circumstances, must be approached from a peace and security point of view. A number of delegations, however, highlighted that this issue cannot be narrowed down to a peace and security issue. Natural resources are first and foremost a source of development for many countries, and governance of a country's own natural resources is an essential part of its national sovereignty. The real issue, when talking about natural resources and conflict, is how to maintain or revert to this "normal situation" in those countries where natural resources become an element of conflict. In other terms, how to pull natural resources out of the sphere of peace and security and to bring them back where they belong, in the sphere of national development? This requires a broad approach, taking into account various aspects.

3. An approach to better understand the different aspects of the issue is to make a distinction between the successive phases of a (potential) conflict. The challenges are different in each phase; the responses of the international community and the actors involved must also be different.

- In case of conflict, the challenge is how to prevent the exploitation of natural resources from contributing to the conflict.
- In a post-conflict situation, the emphasis shifts towards promoting the exploitation of natural resources as an engine for development. Peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts of the national government, of multilateral institutions such as the Peacebuilding Commission or the international financial institutions, of the international donor community and of civil society actors need to pay appropriate attention to the issue of natural resource governance, each with their own specificity.
- From a conflict prevention perspective, the question is how to prevent natural resources from becoming a source of instability or internal conflict. Governance of natural resources is a key issue in this respect. This is essentially a matter of national sovereignty. There is, however, room for international cooperation, exchanges of expertise and best practices, institutional capacity-building and awareness-raising about the issues involved.

4. When addressing the link between natural resources and conflict, a wide variety of stakeholders have to be involved. Governments of producing, transit and importing countries need to cooperate to ensure the efficiency and transparency of the exploitation of and trade in natural resources and to fight against illegal trafficking and exploitation. The United Nations, other multilateral bodies and regional organizations can provide the appropriate forums and instruments for such cooperation, each with their specificity. The private sector in its various dimensions (extractive industries, brokers, traders and so forth) and civil society have their own responsibilities.

Natural resources and conflict on the agenda of the General Assembly

5. Belgium is convinced that the question of natural resources and conflict is multifaceted and deserves a broad debate tying together its many dimensions. In this regard, the United Nations General Assembly offers an inclusive and comprehensive governmental forum for such a cross-cutting debate.

6. The aim of such a debate would be:

- to stimulate further reflection on how the exploitation of natural resources can play a role in certain conflicts, and on how to ensure that natural resources become a source of development
- to better understand what the international community can do to assist governments in this area, and what the responsibilities of the various concerned actors are, including the private sector and regional organizations
- to take stock of ongoing initiatives and explore how their effectiveness can be strengthened.

7. No item currently on the agenda of the General Assembly offers a scope broad enough to cover all aspects of such a debate. Belgium therefore proposes the inclusion of a supplementary item entitled "Natural resources and conflict" in the agenda of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly.